**Non-utilisation of funds for welfare of SCs and STs in Tamil Nadu**

3611. SHRI N. THALAVAI SUNDARAM: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the non-utilisation of funds allocated to Tamil Nadu for the welfare of SCs and STs under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes during the year 1997; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons advanced for non-utilisation and the steps taken to ensure proper and timely utilisation of funds?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The non-utilisation of funds relates mainly to the Centrally sponsored schemes of construction of Hostels and Ashram Schools. In view of the time required for acquisition of land, finalisation of tenders and execution of work, all such works take two to three years for completion. The concerned State/UT governments are required to furnish quarterly progress reports. In case of undue delays further grants are withheld till utilisation of previous grants improves In respect of other schemes unspent balances are adjusted against the claims for the subsequent years.

The position of utilisation of funds by Tamil Nadu under the Centrally sponsored schemes during 1996-97 and 1997-98 is indicated below:

(Rs. in lakhs)

| S. NO. | Scheme | 1996-97 | | 1997-98 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Released | Unspent | Released | Unspent |
| *Scheduled Castes* | | | | | |
| 1. | Boys Hostel | Nil | Nil | Nil | *170.00 |
| 2. | Girls Hostel | Nil | Nil | 339.00 | ** |
| *Scheauled Tribes* | | | | | |
| 1. | Boys Hostel | 35.24 | 35.24 | Nil | Nil |
| 2. | Girls Hostel | 8.04 | 8.04 | Nil | Nil |

* Includes unutilised balance since 1995-96.

** Utilisation will be known only when utilisation certificates are received from State Government.